Elevating the role of National Statistical Offices in Voluntary National Reviews to tackle the data drought of the 2030 Agenda

Side Event at the High-Level Political Forum 2024

16 July 2024, 1:30-2:30 PM | Danny Kaye Visitor's Centre and online
Registration: https://bit.ly/HLPF2024_NSO-VNR

Co-hosted by the Government of Kenya, Directorate General of International Partnerships of the European Commission, The Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), this side event focuses on highlighting the indispensable role of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in strengthening the evidence-base of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process and the follow-up. The organisers will share best practices from countries and present new analysis and guidance for Governments, who look for ways to boost their capacities for an improved monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for a better data governance.

Background

The VNR process has emerged as a crucial mechanism for reviewing progress towards the SDGs. It provides an opportunity for countries to showcase their efforts, achievements, and challenges in implementing the SDGs. But the significant extent of SDG data gaps continues to hamper the monitoring of the SDG progress in low- and middle-income countries. Governments and development partners must boost their support to National Statistical Systems (NSS) and, in particular, to the NSOs, to help them furnish actionable and trusted development data in an era of unprecedented technological advancements and challenges.

While the appreciation of evidence by governments is visible, for example, in improved quality of Statistical Annexes attached to the VNR reports, the gains of VNR momentum still does not translate to long term and sustainable solutions to improve the evidence production and use. The significance of NSOs in VNRs is often underappreciated and overlooked: NSOs play a pivotal role in ensuring availability of quality data for the SDG monitoring and in assisting the government in data-driven target setting. Governments can use the VNR process to bring the power of data to policymaking by tapping into the strengths of NSOs. This includes relying on NSOs to track progress on SDGS, to strengthen the capacity of the national statistical system and to build strategic data partnerships in various areas of development.

Key Themes:

The role of the evidence-base and inclusive approaches to data in the Voluntary National Review process

The Government of Kenya will showcase its efforts to strengthen the evidence-based monitoring of the SDGs, by supporting the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in its data coordination efforts and by

leveraging inclusive data practices, such as reuse of citizen-generated data, which build on the whole-of-society approach to the implementation and reporting on the 2030 Agenda.

The value of strong NSOs during and beyond the VNR

This session will delve into the specific functions and responsibilities of NSOs within the VNR process, emphasizing their role as providers of high-quality data and key actors of robust data governance. The event will feature the official launch of a new report that examines the role of NSOs in VNRs, presenting findings, insights, and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders.

Participants will discuss the challenges faced by NSOs in fulfilling their mandate within the VNR framework, including coordination and data access issues. Additionally, opportunities for strengthening NSOs' capacity and partnership potential will be explored. Country representatives will share experiences and best practices in leveraging NSOs effectively for in the VNR process, showcasing successful strategies for data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

The event will call governments and development partners to support NSOs in fulfilling their role in VNRs by mobilizing resources, fostering cross-sectoral partnerships, and integrating data-driven approaches into national development planning processes.

Target Audience

- Government officials and representatives of NSOs
- Development partners, including international organizations and donors
- Civil society organizations.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness of innovative approaches and best practices from countries in leveraging NSOs and inclusive data practices for VNRs.
- Increased awareness of new guidance available for countries to strengthen the evidence-base of their VNRs.
- Appreciation of the crucial role played by NSOs in the VNR process.
- Identification of challenges faced by NSOs and exploration of strategies to address them effectively.

Agenda

Time EDT	Item	Facilitator	Chair
1:30-1:35	Welcome	PR, Kenya Mission to the UN, New York	TBC, Government of Kenya
1:35-1:40	Opening Remarks	Mr. João Pedro Azevedo, Chief Statistician, UNICEF (online)	
1:40-2:00	Presentations	"The role of National Statistics Offices in Voluntary National Reviews", Findings and recommendations from the new PARIS21 report, Ms. Liliana Suchodolska, Policy Analyst, PARIS21 "Kenya's data journey for evidence based VNRs", Mr. Macdonald G. Obudho, Director General, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (online)	
2:00-2:25	Panel Discussion and Q&A	Moderation: Ms. Chika Hayashi, Senior Advisor, Monitoring and Statistics, UNICEF - Mr. Festus Wangwe, Director of the International Frameworks Coordination Division, State Department for Economic Planning, Kenya - Ms. Heather Page, Statistician, United Nations Statistics Division, UN DESA	
2:25-2:30	Closing Remarks	Mr. Axel de la Maisonneuve, EU Ambassador to ECOSOC and Head of International Partnerships and Sustainable Development, EU Delegation to the UN	